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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/595,136	06/16/2000	Karl-Heinz Ellenberger	Mlr206	2734
7590	11/28/2006		EXAMINER	
Horst M Kasper 13 Forest Drive Warren, NJ 07059			RODRIGUEZ, JOSEPH C	
		ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER	
		3653		

DATE MAILED: 11/28/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/595,136	ELLENBERGER ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Joseph C. Rodriguez	3653	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on _____.
- 2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 2-8 and 10-30 is/are pending in the application.
 - 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 2,4-8,11,17,23,25,26 and 29 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) 3,10,12-16,18-22,24,27, 28 and 30 is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on 16 June 2000 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____. |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____. | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____. |

Final Rejection

Applicant's arguments filed 4/7/06 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive for reasons detailed below.

The 35 U.S.C. 112 rejections are maintained or modified as follows:

These rejections have been withdrawn.

The prior art rejections are maintained or modified as follows:

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 2, 8, 11, 17, 23 and 29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Rosenfeld (US 4,036,365).

Rosenfeld teaches a method and apparatus (Fig. 1-3) for sorting laundry comprising a feed device with a funnel (20), a transport device (50, 52) with a transport band (152) which receives laundry pieces separated by a predetermined distance, a recognition device (32, 34), a registering device (col. 6, ln. 1-16), a processor (i.e., control means) (42), collection containers (60, 64, 66, 68, 70), and a collection device (42, 50).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 4-7 and 25-26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rosenfeld in view of Weiss et al. ("Weiss") (US 4,239,435).

Rosenfeld as set forth above teaches all that is claimed except for expressly teaching a registering device either pre-disposed or post-disposed in relation to a collection device. Weiss, however, explicitly teaches the use of predisposed sensors (i.e., photodetectors/register devices) for each receiving/collecting station (Abstract; col. 14, ln. 48 et seq.). Moreover, the use of sensors for each collecting station allows the sorter to better coordinate the release of each article into a collection station as well as assuring that an article is present (Id.). Further, the positioning (i.e., post-disposed) of the sensor can be regarded as a mere design parameter well known to one with skill in the laundry sorter arts. Therefore, it would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to modify the invention of Rosenfeld as taught above.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments that the prior art fails to teach the claimed features are unpersuasive. In particular, Applicant's focus on the dispensing action of the feeding

device is misplaced. A review of Rosenfeld clearly shows teaches that some form of feeding, dispensing and transporting is occurring in the laundry sorting device (Fig. 1), thus although the funnel may not be itself be involved in *active* dispensing it is clearly operating in conjunction with the transport conveyor and picker to dispense the laundry items. Consequently, the claims stand rejected.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 3, 10, 12-16 and 18-22, 24, 27-28 and 30 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Examiner has maintained the prior art rejections, statutory rejections and drawing objections as previously stated and as modified above. Applicant's amendment necessitated any new grounds of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a). The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the

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shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Conclusion

Any references not explicitly discussed above but made of record are considered relevant to the prosecution of the instant application.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to **Joseph C Rodriguez** whose telephone number is **571-272-6942** (M-F, 9 am – 6 pm, EST). The Supervisory Examiner is Patrick Mackey, **571-272-6916**.

The **Official** fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is **571-273-8300**.

The examiner's **UNOFFICIAL Personal fax number** is **571-273-6942**.

Further, information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system.

Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PMR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PMR only.

For more information about the PAIR system, see

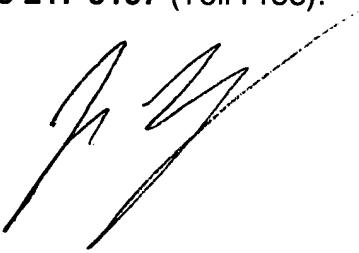
<http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>

Should you have questions on access to the Private PMR system, contact the
Electronic Business Center (EBC) at **866-217-9197** (Toll Free).

Signed by Examiner Joseph Rodriguez

Jcr

November 24, 2006

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Rodriguez". It is written in a cursive style with a diagonal line extending from the end of the signature.